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Stamas introduces resolution addressing cormorant population

LANSING - State Sen. Tony Stamas (R-Midland) last week introduced Senate Resolution 196 calling for management of the double-crested cormorant.

Many officials believe the bird's increasing population has had adverse effects on populations of recreational and commercial fish, and other water and wading birds that use island nesting sites.

Last month the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released their proposed rule for managing the double-crested cormorant. SR 196 urges the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to implement a program of cormorant management pursuant to the authority extended by the FWS.

"The cormorant has caused severe damage to northern Michigan's waters by seriously reducing the Brown Trout population," Stamas said. "While we need to make sure that long-term protection of the bird's overall population is maintained, a reasonable management program is needed now to bring back the recreational and tourism opportunities that once existed in our area."

The FWS rule allows state fish and wildlife agencies in 24 states (including Michigan) to take action to control cormorant populations without obtaining a federal permit. According to FWS, local control of double-crested cormorants is the preferred control method because the negative impacts of large double-crested cormorant populations tend to be localized.

SR 196 will likely be referred to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs. More information on the cormorant and the FWS rule can be found at www.fws.gov.

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